Federal City Performing Arts Association
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the 2003-2004 Board of Directors
Washington National Cathedral Library, Washington, DC
Monday, December 8, 2003

Present

Board: Brayton, Cohen, Cole, Hall, Herman, Jansing, Lewis, Mahaffey, McGee, Monell, Ohnmacht, Reiffer, Streit

Absent: Benton, Crown, Gannon, Lee, GANNON

Proxy: Jansing has Lee's undirected proxy

Staff: Bielenberg, Buhrman, Garcia-Christie

Guest: Larry P. Bormel, CPA of Bormel, Grice & Huyett, CPAs

Call to Order

Chairman Streit called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Mahaffey moved that the minutes of the October 13, 2003 Board Meeting be approved as amended. Brayton seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Audit Report

Larry Bormel, CPA of Bormel, Grice & Huyett discussed the Independent Auditors' Report for the Federal City Performing Arts Association for Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003. Bormel indicated that the Association got an unqualified (clean) opinion. The financial statements of the Association present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Association as of June 30, 2003 and 2002, and the changes in its net assets and cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the U.S. Copies of the document were distributed to each Board member.

Bormel commended Garcia-Christie and Bielenberg and reemphasized the fact that there were no reportable conditions. He did have several observations to share, to help the Board in subsequent fiscal years including the percentage of fundraising expenses as a proportion of contributed income; and asked the Board to give more thought to how expenses are being allocated.

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the audit report as submitted. McGee seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Finance Report

Lewis distributed copies of the December report.

Lewis indicated that thus far we are doing okay. Bright spots continue to be revenue from advertising and the Capital Club gala. Challenges center mostly on ticket sales - subscriptions are lower than our goal; Charlie Brown ticket sales were down (however, lower than projected expenses helped off-set some of the loss). We will have a better idea in February of where we stand after revenues from the Holiday concert are received and tabulated.

Lewis indicated that there have been some delays in posting receipts and deposits due to the transition to eTapestry, and the need to integrate this new system with QuickBooks. He indicated that he expected to have more up-to-date financial information in time for the February Board meeting.

Motion: Hall moved to accept the financial report as distributed. Brayton seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

Bielenberg reported that David Taylor has joined Harold Lewis and Peter Brayton on the Finance Committee. We ended last season with an operating surplus of just over $6,000.

Biggest challenge at this time is the conversion to the new eTapestry database. All six of our previously standalone databases have been merged; however, communication between eTapestry and QuickBooks is not happening properly at this time. Another challenge will be to dedupe the merged database.

The Development Committee, chaired by Susan Crown is pursuing a number of sponsorship leads, as well as developing a planned giving program for the Chorus.

Rob Hall will host the special Cabaret Benefit program at Mimi's American Bistro on Monday evening February 2, 2004.

Under Jack Reiffer's coordination, plans continue to move ahead for the Spring Dinner Dance and Auction.

Bielenberg continues to pursue corporate sponsorships. Several new leads are being actively worked on.

The DC Commission for the Arts and Humanities has given preliminary approval for funding consideration. However, the portion of the D.C. budget including this funding has not yet been approved by Congress. We should know by March 1, 2004.

Capital Club is doing well. Bielenberg extended a special thanks to Jerry Lee for coordinating the special event for donors who gave $500 more. He also thanked Andy Smock, who arranged for catering through Whole Foods Market, and Best Cellars for donating a portion of the wine served at the event. He and Lee (through Lee's written report) thanked Roger Bergstrom for arranging for the space at Arlington Courthouse Place.

We will have an end-of-year appeal this year in the form of a holiday card.

Ticket sales for the holiday concert were extremely strong with two of the three performances selling out while the third sold a greater than 80% house. This was good news since season subscriptions are running at approximately 80% of our goal. Bielenberg thanked those Board members who met the Board's target of six subscriptions per Board member.

The Marketing Committee, under the Leadership of John Benton, is pursuing a number of media leads. Special thanks goes to Ryan Athearn for making contact with Bob Madigan, resulting in coverage on WTOP AM and WGMS FM.

Bielenberg provided an overview of the events and meetings that he attended over the past two months, continuing his effort on behalf of the Association to increase our visibility.

Artistic Director's Report

Buhrman stated that he is involved with making arrangements for the second educators' workshop. GMCW will be cosponsoring this along with the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, the National Association of Independent Schools, and the Eastern Educational Resource Collaborative.

Our new commission, Changing Hearts will be received in January. A team of GMCW members had the opportunity to review the music and lyrics and made a few changes which are now being incorporated by the composer.

Let Me Be the Music, our third annual Cabaret is well underway for the opening on Monday, February 2, 2004.

Bye Bye Birdie principal role casting was completed in November. We will have 125 GMCW singers participating in this performance.

Buhrman and Athearn are heading a new group to address group sales. A team of 8-10 people will be put in place, each of whom will develop one-on-one relationships with organizations in the DC area.

GALA Festival registration is excellent. As of now, we have registered more than 200 singers and and family members. We expect that both GMCW and Potomac Fever will be performing on Sunday, the first concert day.

Potomac Fever will be performing at the PFLAG Holiday Celebration. On February 21, PF will be special guests of the South Florida Gay Men's Chorus Festival.

Governance

Ohnmacht reported that the Committee is active, and continues to take prospective candidates to lunch.

Ohnmacht stated that the Committee was involved in three major activities: 1) Developing a slate of candidates for the 2004-2005 Board; 2) Candidates for the positions of Board Chair and Board Secretary; 3) Honorary Board - getting this off the ground.

Ohnmacht indicated that the Committee welcomes names of potential candidates.

Ohnmacht wished for a motion to formally approve the concept of establishing an Honorary Board.

Ohnmacht requested that the GMCW Board embrace the notion of an Honorary Board effective immediately, and permit the Committee to continue to identify candidates and announce these next year, and further, that the Committee be authorized to contact Representative James P. McGovern of Massachusetts and actress Elizabeth Taylor to invite them to serve on the Honorary Board.

There was discussion on details of what the Honorary Board entailed. Ohnmacht indicated that Peter Rosenstien is drafting a statement of responsibilities.

Motion: Ohnamcht moved that GMCW approves establishment of an Honorary Board. Hall seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

Motion: Ohnmacht moved that for our newly approved Honorary Board, Jim McGovern and Elizabeth Taylor be invited to become members. McGee seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

Mahaffey applauded the Governance Committee for getting this off the ground.

President's Report

Jansing reported that the general status of the Chorus is excellent. The weekend retreat in October went extremely well. The membership had an opportunity to ask questions, and a number of the issues raised are being followed up on by the Leadership Team. Among the issues raised: membership perks, rehearsal space; and storage space. All in all, the consensus is that we are on the right track.

Jansing indicated that he, along with his Team, will be looking at other possible sites for the retreat, since the size of the Chorus is making it increasingly difficult to use Round Meadow.

Roster/Membership database responsibilities will be moved to the VP/Membership position, currently held by Dan Patton.

The Holiday concert was a great success; Chorus members participated in helping as needed.

There was an issue at the final rehearsal of a member becoming ill. Jansing inquired about emergency procedures. Jansing will bring to his Committee and bring back recommendations to the Board. Issues that should be looked at include emergency evacuation drills, precautions for dealing with ill members, etc.

Capital Club

Lee was not in attendance. Bielenberg distributed and summarized Lee's report. Revenues are strong. Matching funds are expected to come in at a later date from Steve Herman and Michael Armentrout.

Lee, along with several volunteers, will be contacting former Capital Club members who have not yet renewed for this year. Success in this endeavor can result in a significant increase in Capital Club revenues.

Marketing Report

Benton reported that the Marketing Committee met twice in the fall. Emphasis: 1) Season Ticket Sales - deliver a concentrated effort to bring last year's subscribers back (or find out why they are not renewing) and meeting our goal of a 10% increase for this year; 2) concentrate on Bye Bye Birdie marketing, looking at exposure in the major media; 3)develop a full marketing/public relations plan for the 2004-2005 concert season.

Auction Report

Reiffer reported that plans for the Spring Dinner Dance were moving ahead. Dan Hann has agreed to take on the leadership of the auction portion of the event. Our goal is to put together a task force to identify ten big ticket items.

The dinner portion is also going well. Bill Gannon will coordinate the program for obtaining table captains. Current plans are to charge $125 as the basic price, with $200 VIP tickets being made available (to include runners, recognition and other benefits still under discussion). To make budget, the goal is to sell 300 tickets, although we hopefully will exceed this number.

There will be an awards portion of the evening, honoring up to three individuals or organizations.

Development Committee

Crown could not attend the meeting. Hall made a brief report. Looking at funding from the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and also looking at the Mayor's Arts Award program.

Chairman's Report (Streit)

Susan Crown has agreed to head an Investment Subcommittee to oversee our investments.

We continue to work with Stanley Allen in obtaining a contribution from the estate of Robert Wonneberger. This will be a restricted fund for production-related events. We will probably be able to use a certain percentage annually until the fund is exhausted. Details are still being worked out. The question arose as to whether this could be some kind of matching fund, or at least a fund which can accept contributions, given the incredible love for Wonneberger.

The commitment of Board members to bring in new season subscribers has not reached the anticipated goal. Our near-term fundraising opportunity is the Cabaret benefit at Mimi's on February 2, 2004. Streit asked that each Board member be committed to bring at least two new people as well as two Chorus members to Mimi's.

Streit said that the committees are doing a great job. He also cited the absolutely fantastic job that the staff has been doing. He thanked Buhrman for producing such a wonderful product. He also commended Bielenberg and Garcia-Christie on their really hard work with the eTapestry conversion.

He has challenged Bielenberg to take a greater role in fundraising.

Merchandising

McGee reported very successful sales at the Holiday concert. We sold $1,200. We also raised $600 for NoVAM through the sale of their gold ornaments.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m on a motion by Brayton, seconded by Cohen.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven J. Herman, Secretary
February 9, 2004